1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

prevalence among the Sinhalese of magic having for its object the production of disease and death. Even the Henebedda Veddas, who have adopted a number of Sinhalese charms against animals, do not believe in this form of magic. The presence of a woman with wasting of both legs and contracture, the result of a long-standing ulcerative process of obscure origin which developed spontaneously, enabled this to be tested.

Although we discussed this woman's condition with a number of Veddas it was only once suggested, and then very doubtfully, that it might have been due to Sinhalese *kuvijam* magic[1], and it was clear that to the community generally this woman's disease was simply an accident, the origin of which they did not understand and did not trouble about.

Though Veddas, and especially Vedda women, are extremely shy there is no belief in the evil eye, or in the danger of being "overlooked."

Charms protective against Animals.

The bear is the only animal that the Veddas really fear, and there is no doubt that a number of Veddas and jungle-dwelling Sinhalese are mauled each year, indeed, at least one man in each community that we visited bore the marks of the bear's paws. Bear's flesh is not eaten and we doubt if Veddas ever voluntarily attack a bear, though there is no doubt that they sometimes kill one that has attacked them. Hence, the bear is called the "enemy" and his name is seldom mentioned nor is he represented among the rock paintings at Pihilegodagalge although the leopard, who steals the Vedda dogs and is hated in consequence, is represented. When questioned on the subject our male informants said nothing, but a number of women looked surprised and one said quite decidedly that no one would paint a bear. The words used in speaking of the bear are of

[1] That the *kuvijam* idea was foreign to the one Vedda who suggested it, was proved by the results of further questioning, when our informant gave an outline of one of the commonest Sinhalese beliefs as to the method of preparation and action of *kuvijam* charms. The reference to *kuvijam* in one of the "Vedda charms" published by Mr De Zoysa (*Journal Ceylon Branch R. A. S.*, Vol. VII, 1881, p. 103), cannot be taken to invalidate our conclusions, for many of these charms show unlimited Sinhalese influence.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

The words used in speaking of the bear are of
825 interest from this standpoint. We believe that in most Vedda
789 communities *walaha* the ordinary word for bear is seldom or never used[1], certainly this was the case at Sitala Wanniya where the word ordinarily used for bear was *hæriá*. This word was not considered a dangerous word to use when all bears were at a distance, but when there was any possibility of coming in contact with a bear the animal was spoken of as *hattra*, the meaning of this word being "enemy" or "adversary." On one occasion when with Handuna of Sitala Wanniya we came to a hill covered with irregularly weathered rocks and known to be the haunt of bears, Handuna shouted *hattra yanda* ("enemy begone") before taking an abrupt turn in the track which here skirted a mass of rock. He repeated this sentence two or three times in a loud voice and assured us that we could now proceed without running the least risk of meeting a bear, and he himself led us round the rock with every appearance of careless ease, explaining that even if bears were about they would have heard what he had said and would have moved away. Two of the Henebedda Veddas exhibited the same appearance of carelessness when guiding us to a rock-shelter which though sometimes used by Veddas had not been tenanted for some time and bore obvious signs of being the lair of a bear. Sita Wanniya, our guide, explained his attitude by his belief in the power of the charms with which he was confident he could put any bear to flight.

These charms were recited in a loud voice, in fact the last words were almost shrieked and would doubtless have turned any bear, for it is a well known fact that the Sinhalese bear fears man and only attacks when surprised or cornered. This is shown by the circumstances in which the majority of accidents with bears occur. A man coming silently along a narrow jungle track suddenly meets a bear, or disturbs one grubbing behind a white ant heap. It is then that the bear, as much frightened as the man, charges inflicting severe though seldom fatal injuries.

[184]

[1] We met with one obvious exception to this rule, the Henebedda youths Sita Wanniya and Poromala used the word *walaha* quite freely even in the jungle, and old Poromala, half of whose face was torn away by a bear some years ago, has been nicknamed Walaha, the Bear. This name was, however, given him by the Sinhalese.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Bailey's remarks on these charms, which unfortunately he does not quote, are extremely pertinent. "I shall never forget the first time one of these Vedda charms was recited for my edification. It was midnight; I was in the heart of a dense and gloomy forest, twenty miles from any habitation.... I was chatting to an intelligent Vedda at my side and then learnt for the first time, that they had charms....I begged him to recite one—and, in an instant, the forest re-echoed with such unearthly yells, that I felt he would be a bold bear indeed, whose heart did not die within him, and whose legs did not carry him far out of hearing of the repeated and discordant 'bahagang! wirocowee! wirocowah!' which formed the burden of the charm. Of its perfect efficacy, my friend had no doubt; nor indeed had I, but he was rather huffed when I suggested that the mere noise may have had something to do with its success[1]."

A youth, Kaira of Bingoda, wore a number of bone beads on his waist string. He refused to sell these or exchange them for other beads or cloth, and though obviously not desirous of discussing them, stated that he had made them by grinding down the bones of a bear which he had found in the jungle. Although the remains of animals are not commonly found we did ourselves find the remains of one bear which we identified with certainty by the skull which was tolerably well preserved. The wearing of these beads as a matter of personal feeling by a single Vedda, if not exactly an example of magic, seems to us to be an example of the mode of thought from which magical practices spring and perhaps an example of an early experiment in magic, which under favourable circumstances might give rise to an amulet of bear's bone.

The Veddas of Situla Wanniya have no charms against bears or other animals and the only charms directed towards this end that we could discover were a number obviously of Sinhalese origin which we collected at Henebedda. Probably these are not of very recent introduction, for we obtained some of them from old Poromala, nicknamed Walaha. Poromala is one of the oldest men of the community and is its leader as

[1] Op. cit. p. 289.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

261 beautiful species of Gardenia with fragant flowers and crimped
276 laurel-like leaves. These seeds or nuts are astringent and to me resemble exactly in taste those of the areca palm. They are only an occasional luxury however. The bark which he chews is almost a necessity to a Vedda, the leaves or seeds a mere luxury[1]."

[625] It is not always that the Veddas can obtain lime, which they
276 make by burning the shells of a land snail *wantaeko* (*Cyclophorus involvulus*). The shells are laid on red hot pieces of charcoal, more glowing embers are heaped around and upon them, and the whole is fanned with a tuft of green leaves for a few minutes, when the embers surrounding the shells are raked away and the shells allowed to cool before being crushed and dropped into the vessel in which the lime is carried. This is [415] often a tin match box or it may be a brass covered cartridge case. Specially made lime spatulae do not exist, but one Vedda of Henebedda had a long broad nail with which he removed the lime from his tin match box.

276 The betel pouch is usually a roughly sewn bag of trade
415 cloth, but the Henebedda Veddas also make pouches of monkey skin, one of which is shown in Plate LXVII. We omitted to inquire how the hair was removed, but probably it was singed off, the whole skin being subsequently scraped.

[1] *Op. cit.* Vol. I. p. 191.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

ward, shoot their long-bladed arrows in the soft fleshy part under the forearm, and so disable him.* 224

They have a great dread of meeting elephants at night, and have charms to protect them from them—not only to turn them from their path, but to render innoxious the bear, the leopard, and the wild boar. And I must here record, that they are the only charms I have entire faith in. 825 789

I never shall forget the first time one of these Veddah charms was recited for my edification. It was midnight; I was in the heart of a dense and gloomy forest, twenty miles from any habitation. The moon had not quite risen, and the stems of the trees and the gigantic pendent creepers were flickering in the uncertain light cast by the torches, which my Veddah guides, gliding through the forest, bore before me. I was chatting to an intelligent Veddah by my side and then learnt for the first time, that they had charms, having been till then, like Tennent, ignorant of the fact.† I begged him to recite one—and, in an instant, the forest re-echoed with such unearthly yells, that I felt he would be a bold bear indeed, whose heart did not die within him, and whose legs did not carry him far out of hearing of the repeated and discordant "behegang! wiroooweel wiroowah!" which formed the burden of the charm. Of its perfect efficacy, my friend had no doubt; nor indeed had I, but he was rather huffed when I suggested that the mere noise may have had something to do with its success.‡

Honey, and the grub in the comb, before it becomes the bee, are both staple food with the Veddahs, and their acuteness in discovering hives, when bee-hunting, is very remarkable. I have seen a Veddah stealing through the forest, suddenly stop—listen for an instant with uplifted hand—dart off into the jungle and return in an incredibly short space of time with a fresh honey-comb; while I have been in vain endeavouring 222 [262]

* This fact I established beyond a doubt. I questioned many Veddahs on that practice, which Knox treats as a fable, p. 63, viz., striking an axe into the sole of an elephant's foot; and I was assured by several that, though they never practise it themselves, the Veddahs of Batticaloa do, and that they even hamstring elephants. To those who know the pluck and dexterity of the professed elephant catchers in the north of the island, there is nothing extraordinary or incredible in a Veddah approaching sufficiently close to an elephant to wound his foot or to hamstring him. But I have inquired, and cannot satisfactorily establish the truth of the statement; and I confess that I am inclined to doubt their physical power to do either.

† Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 448, 2nd edit.

‡ Tennent, vol. i, part ii, chap. i, p. 139, gives a lamentable account of the inefficacy of a charm for bears. I dare say the unhappy moorman there mentioned would have been more fortunate had he known the Veddah charm. The Singhalese have charms for the same purpose; but they differ from those of the Veddahs. [171]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

Vela was an interesting little chap and, unlike the others, had always something to say for himself. He entertained us with charms, pleasing lullabies, and songs of rock and stream demons that came as fast as *na* leaves shaken by the wind, in the guise of bears, their mouths adrip with human blood. These he sang despite warnings from the others who reminded him that he had sucked a chicken bone, which was a dangerous thing to do before invoking devils lest it invite their anger.

Coming to a pool, brown with decaying leaves, we asked if the water was good. "Very good," said a Vedda, adding the epicurean touch, "Those fallen flowers floating there make the water sweet; they are the flowers that give good honey."

It was high noon when Veddas left us to go in search of food. But Vela lingered to tell us of the oppression of the local headman. Did they but catch a young deer or pea-chick that came their way they were prosecuted. The visiting apothecary too was bad; he gave them no medicines except for gifts of honey or meat; and the poor fellows had little enough for themselves.

Having visited a cave containing the battered remains of an old Buddha, we continued our circuit of the rock; and after a walk of an hour and a half under a burning sky, came to the Veddas of the *Kudda Ulpotha*. These had no huts of any sort, but merely sat grouped in families under various trees. It was the season of the *kong* fruit, of which there was plenty about. Women were boiling down the luscious pulp with which to make cakes, or extracting from the seeds an oil said to be good for sores and wounds. Very fond of the fruit they all were; it had been their only sustenance for days. One little urchin, his mouth be-ringed with parangi ulcers, was licking clean a coconut shell containing the acrid juice, with a relish worthy of a tastier dish.

The patriarch of the settlement, Naida, and his wife were typical Veddas; but here again most of the others showed Tamil admixture. One man had a large scar across his face. The manner he came by it illustrates well the aggressiveness of the little Ceylon sloth-bear. When out collecting honey he saw a she-bear and her cub. Realizing the certain disaster of such an encounter he cautiously climbed a tree; but in doing so snapped a twig and gave himself away. With a series of blood-curdling cries she charged him, and clambering up the tree, bit and clawed him severely. A large flap was torn from his face. This his father sewed up with a thorn and fibre, and doctored with a result that might have done credit to any surgeon. Living as they invariably do in the neighbourhood of rocks, and having kindred tastes in honey, yams, and fruit, the Veddas and bears often encounter each other, as the ugly scars on many of the men testify.

As, footsore and tired, we rounded the southern end of the rock towards evening, we met parties of Veddas returning with basketfuls of *kong* fruit. One youth was up a tree making the jungle ring to his song as he beat down the berries. As it darkened we reached Manampitiya, but not before we had worried a blind old owl that had descended to a streamlet to quench its thirst.

It is hard to forget that first experience of the Veddas in their homes: those voices in the jungle, that sight of their huts among the trees, and of their women roasting dainty little flowers for food.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

with men astride them, bows fitted with tridentate arrows, and all manner of cabalastic signs. Many an interesting discovery awaits here the spade of the antiquary.

How different is the appeal of ruins buried in the remote forest, in the setting with which Time and Nature have invested them, from those set out in the trim nudity of archaeologic display with tourist-ridden roads leading up to them.

Leaving Dolagalwella we turned up north, and soon entered the first of a series of great parklands we were now to traverse. These fine shooting grounds were probably centuries ago flourishing fields of paddy, fed by large artificial tanks, the crumbling embankments of which often outlie the glades. This is why, perhaps, the best game country in Ceylon to-day is to be found in the precincts of old kingdoms such as those of Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama.

We had put up for the night on a river bed many miles from the nearest settlement, when, to our surprise, a man armed with bow and arrows walked into camp. Approaching us without the least diffidence, he tapped us familiarly on the chest and looked us up and down appraisingly, speaking an incomprehensible jargon. Kombua, he happened to be, a Vedda of Dambana, a score of miles away. He affected ignorance of Sinhalese, and maintained the farce all the time he was with us; but if we wanted evidence that he was imposter in this, we had it the next morning when our cook accidentally dropped an ember on him: "This devil wants to burn me," he said in excellent Sinhalese, taken off his guard. A picturesque fellow was old Kombua, spare, sparse-bearded and beady-eyed. From his gaping ear-holes dangled loosely doubled strings of white beads. In a small bundle knotted round his waist was his baggage, and let into his waist-string was a small axe. He was alertness itself as he guided us the following day. His deep-set eyes took in everything. The flick of a leaf would petrify him on the instant, often with foot uplifted like a startled retriever; the faintest hum and he would search aloft, for honey is food to the Vedda.

The glades teemed with nesting green-pigeons. From many a low bough we started a bird, to discover its clutch of white eggs showing through the meagre nest. I was manoeuvring to add a couple of imperial pigeons to our menu, when of a sudden there was a flutter at my elbow and a jungle hen floated away into the cover of the bordering scrub. I had but to turn my head to discover her mottled eggs in a charred stump. The twigs and creepers about the nest gave it just that air of negligence that was its sole concealment. I debated with my companion as to the freshness of our find. "Oh, they contain young ones right enough; just feel how heavy they are," he said taking an egg in his hand with an air of expertness that disguised a tender heart. I had no pretensions to such skill, but knowing that a jungle hen lays some six to a dozen eggs and seeing that here were only three, decided to rob them, and justifiably as it turned out when we enjoyed them with bacon the following morning.

Coming to a stream we heard, closer than we had ever done before, the melodious mocking of that elusive cuckoo, *cuculus micropterus*. I asked Kombua to show it to me. "He cannot be seen," was the confident assertion of a Sinhalese. The Vedda awaited a repetition of the note, then peered into the dense foliage of a tall tree and in a trice was pointing

5: Spinal D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

to something; but it was long before I saw the bird, a veritable leaf among the leaves and more motionless than they.

The hilly jungles of central Ceylon echo, during certain seasons of the year, to this bird's incessant cry, the popular onomatopoeic renderings of which are, in English, "Captain Philpotts" and "Bring the tappal" and in Sinhalese "*Botuahappan*." Most people have heard, but very few seen, the shy author of these dolorous notes. There is a gruesome story associated with the bird:—A Sinhalese king once asked his dhoby, in order to test his marital fidelity, whether he would cut his wife's neck and bring him her head! "Oh! king," said the man falling at the monarch's feet, "even if you behead me I cannot do such a thing." The following day the king called up the dhoby's wife and made a similar request of her. She replied that she would do it. Going home she helped her husband with his bath, rubbed boiled limes on his head, and cooked him a good meal. Like a good wife she asked him to lay his head on her lap where he soon fell asleep. Then, with a knife she had in readiness, she cut his throat; and severing his neck, put the head into a pot, covered it with a cloth and carried it to the king. On the way she met a man who, singing, asked her, "What do you carry in the pot on your head?"

"I am taking *mee ambu** to the king," answered the woman.

"Why cover it so carefully?" sang he.

"If I take them uncovered, wayfarers will ask me for them," she replied. "It is on a fine journey I go."

When she brought her gift to the king, he was incensed at her cruelty, and ordered her head to be struck off instantly. Ever after, has she gone about in the form of this bird, crying *botua-kappan* (cut the throat), as her one refrain.

While making our way through a tree-studded glade, we surprised two men carrying sacks of dried meat on their shoulders; through rents in the bags peeped unsavoury scraps of sambur, monkey and pig. Their first impulse on seeing us was to escape; for to shoot sambur legitimately, gun and game licences are necessary; and what money have they for these, who have barely the wherewithal to purchase the ammunition for their ramshackle muzzle-loaders.

When we camped, Kombua regaled us with Vedda songs of questionable taste chanted rapidly in a high nasal monotone, lengthened indefinitely by endless repetition, and accompanied in the last staves with a clapping of hands. To the suggestion that he should show his skill in archery he responded with alacrity; jumping up, he seized his weapons as if confident of skill. A fragment of paper, six inches square, placed fifteen paces away, was the mark. At the word he loosed his arrow. A clean miss! He walked up to the target and dashed it down in dudgeon, and nothing would induce him to shoot again. Archery is a lost art to the Veddas, though they still have considerable skill in fashioning bows and arrows. Jungles that echo to guns are no places for bowmen.

Kombua's farewell was as bizarre as his greeting of us. Tossing head and hands in the direction we were taking, and tapping us on the chest, he wished us good going in tones more peremptory than complaisant.

Quite a number of our carriers were half-Veddas. There was one whose constant occupation was to run his fingers comb-fashion through his upstanding hair scraping out vermin. His expression was of that thoughtful seriousness which is the surest mark of profound vaculty.

*A species of mango.

3. A VEDDA OF DIVULANA

DIVULANA was recompense for our toil. The irrigation bungalow, placed high above the bund, over-looked the beautiful hill-encircled tank, whose glassy surface was broken by stones and snags on which cormorants and darters sunned.

Two miles within the forest lived Naga-Kauwa, a witless dwarf of fifty, the sole Vedda of Divulana. Born in Kovil Vannami, he came as a child to the Rasagala caves, of which in their best day his people occupied four or five. Now he and his family alone survived. Three years ago he had abandoned cave life for that of the *chena* ; and there we found him amidst his cassava and the tender teak he nursed for a consideration from Government.

His stalwart sons—quite unlike the father—brought us some yams, a mouse deer and a primitive drum—the broken-off rim of an earthen pot covered with wanderoo skin and fitted with a taut fibre.

Kauwa's hut was a thing to behold. The Tamils had said, "See Kauwa, this is the way to build a house" ; and Kauwa had built this crazy thing a child of twelve might have bettered. The thatch was a medley of dry grass and bark ; the walls were of wattle, which stuck out untrimmed through the roof, and bark slats so poorly fitted together that there was more aperture than cover. The structure was no more than four-foot square and two-storied at that ; merely a covered trestle three feet off the ground. In the lower floor his wife and children lay huddled like rats ; on the upper, its irregularities smoothed with bundles of rush (primary elements of a mat), the lord and master slept. Such was the caveman's first attempt at fashioning an abode. By the entrance was a fireplace, and, scattered about, were the bones of monkeys and monitor lizards and the carapaces of tortoises that had served for food. Stuck in the roof was a broken comb of buffalo horn, true touch of civilisation, for the test of a real Vedda is that his hair must be stranger to a comb.

Getting information from Kauwa was like squeezing water out of a stone ; he could no more describe the simplest thing than he could fly. Still, patience does much and this is what we gleaned :

Tortoises and pangolins are considered good eating by the Veddas ; but the porcupine they abhor, calling it a *rodiya* among beasts, and only killing it to give to their dogs. Why Veddas never eat porcupine I have not been able to ascertain : it is said that, in the old lawless days, they would go the length of burning down a Sinhalese hut in which they discovered a porcupine being cooked. Pork they love because it clears the blood, and one or two pigs a month the Vedda must have. Venison causes itching and is not so good !

Vedda cookery, simple in the extreme, can still boast some tasty dishes : *Gona-perume* is a sausage consisting of alternate layers of sambur meat and fat. *Le-perume* is the same, with the addition of a third layer of blood-clot. *Goa-thel-perume* is made by skinning the monitor's meaty

5t Spinel D-5 (ca. 1990) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

787 To ignore such warnings would be to court failure or even disaster. When a *kotaha* (large gekko) quaintly cries "krok, krok," a Vedda will seriously lean towards it and ask, "Shall we shoot a monkey to-morrow?" "Krok," says the *kotaha*, and the questioner's face falls, for here no answer is good news. Then there is that subtle thing the *kille*, an evil 778 influence possessed by certain kinds of meat when eaten under circum- 262 stances too involved to explain. The flesh of pigs, peafowl, langurs and a species of fish (*wrang*, *monarang*, *wandoorang*, *magurang*) are said to have this property; but here it would seem that the rhyming of the names has something to do with their evil association.

776 There is an interesting little spirit, belief in which (as with many of the other superstitions already mentioned) is as universal among the Sinhalese as the Veddas. *Bothili*, *Vilirany*, or *Kunnu-yakkini** (dirty she-devil) is its name. It is said to have a nasty nack of grasping one's leg in the dark, and so making it wither to the thinness of an *illuk*-blade. The incarnation of a woman who died in child-birth it is thought to be, and comes moaning at night in the form of a light. The story is best told in the words of a solemnly sworn eye-witness:—Kalu Banda (the narrator) and his sister Balahamy were occupying a watch-hut in a *kurrukkan* field one dark night when they heard a moaning as of one in pain—"*andoo*, *andoo*, *oo oo oo*." Kalu Banda, suspecting what it was, told his sister not to speak—for the *villirany* is shy of women and vanishes at the sound of their voice. He then charmed a little oil, and placing it some distance away, called out, "If you have a stomach-ache, come, rub some oil, and go away." A shadow appeared at which Kalu Banda [825] fired. On going to the spot, what should he find but a green blood-sucker with a red head! This is said to be the invariable discovery when the *bodili* is killed. The same is said of the devil bird; but here apparently the rule has exceptions; for I have met several people who shot at devil birds, and had a bird to show.

825 The identity of the devil-bird—*ulama* or *ulaloo*—is still a matter of doubt; and it is a pity that those who have had the rare fortune to shoot this bird have not thought it worth their while to send it up for identification. Much of the mystery surrounding it is due to the fact that it cries only at night and has wide and sporadic circuits. That it has some sort of a crest, I think, there can be no doubt; also that it is a large bird mottled in its breast feathers like a jungle-hen. These particulars all my reliable informants (who shot the bird as it cried at night) have independently confirmed. It is supposed to be the brown wood owl (*Surnium indrani*) by some, the *Huhua nepalensis* by others. The theory that different birds are capable of uttering the devil-bird's cry, is, I think, quite untenable. Its note is too invariable and distinctive for that.

825 787 The cry of the *ulama*, like that of the owl (*bakumuna*) and *kanga*, is said to be a portent, varying according to its direction. Should it come from the west, it forbodes rain; from the east, good luck; from the north, the visit of a relative or friend; from the south, a death. One of these birds hovered about our camp one night uttering its blood-curdling calls, now from this direction, now from that, baffling the ingenuity of 825 its interpreters! Its "hoo-oo" is most eerily human; but it has an even worse note, a gurgling chuckle, strongly suggestive of a person

*This is perhaps some other than the Ceylon loris.

λ [a species of lizard.—Auct.]

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

being strangled. I know a man who, on hearing this cry, rushed out of this house one night, lantern in hand, imagining murder was afoot! A creature with a voice like that should not complain if stories are told of it. According to some, the bird is the incarnation of a Buddhist priest who goes about seeking his stolen book wailing, "*Mai potha ho?*" (Where is my book?). Others say the *ulama* cries whenever it sees a corpse prepared for burial held up before it by an exultant demon; then uttering a succession of screams it falls senseless from its perch. The most gruesome story to its credit is the following; even the old women who relate these tales show particular reticence with regard to this one:—

Once there lived a man and his wife and they had a little child. One day when the woman went out to fetch firewood, the man killed his child, cut up some of its flesh and cooked and ate it, leaving a portion on the fire for his wife. When she returned she saw the meat and asked her husband where he had got it.

"Never mind that," said the man. "You eat."

The woman was enjoying her meal when suddenly she noticed a child's finger on her plate.

"Where is our child?" she asked apprehensively.

"That is what you are eating", said her inhuman husband.

Thereupon the woman, thrusting the handle of a coconut-shell spoon into her head, fled into the jungle shrieking, "*Mai lamaya ho? Mai lamaya ho?*" (Where is my child? Where is my child?) and became the crested *ulama*. Now this story, folk-lore though it be, confirms the assumption that the devil bird has some sort of a tuft on its head.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

front of it is a much chipped *opulu* tree from which the Veddas every now and then renew their chew. Throughout the day the surrounding woods echo to the voices of food-gatherers or the blows of axes, as combs are cut out of hollow trees. At fiful intervals the *kolong koha* (stork-billed King-fisher), lord of the rocky stream, raises a clamorous cry, or the wood-pecker startlingly proclaims to the world that it sees the great she-demon (*maha yakkini*). As evening comes, the *kotaha* (gekko) that shares the cave, drawls in quaint imitation of his name, "ko-tak-ko." The night is ushered in by the solemn notes of the night jar* and bell-like sounds of frogs. The crescent moon shines through the trees, peopling the forest with mysterious shadows. Strange noises are heard around, a breaking branch perhaps, a dropping stone, or an animal's foot-falls. Then the little one creeps to its mother whispering, "Mother, the *kotha*"; and she, fondling, replies, "Yes, it is the *kotha*, child; be still." Now fires are stirred, and the Veddas, couched on leaves, and doubled up under their meagre rags, lie as close to them as they dare. For the caves are cold at night even on the hottest day. And every now and then throughout the dark, one or other of them groans with the chill, gets up, pokes the fire, and snuggles nearer to it. Is it a wonder that ash is the morning mark of the Vedda and *Alu galge* a favourite name of his cave? By six, the morning mists have melted and the cave begins to warm.

*At dusk, and all through the night, Hardwicke's night jar gathers into its rich liquid notes the silence and mystery of the forest. There is no jungle, however desolate, in which this ever welcome music is not heard. It is at once the curfew of the jungle, the embodiment of all the stealthy, nocturnal life in it, and the destiny and doom of it.

Paliku-kati-peruwa (seven-sons-are) is the Sinhalese name of the bird in perfect imitation of its cry; and the following story explains it.—A woman once sent her seven sons into the jungle to fell trees. One of the trees falling in their direction, the brothers attempted to shoulder it off and were all killed. The mother, having cooked the evening meal, waited at home for her sons. But as they did not return she went out to look for them, and found them all dead beside the fallen tree. Taking up an axe she killed herself and became this bird; and now from dusk till dawn she cries *paliku-kati-peruwa* through the lonesome woods